

MAD APRIL

I put a new drum belt
on the gas dryer,
the big gray steel drum
reminding me of one of
Max Ernst's surrealist elephants.
Wrestled it all back together
and screwed back in the screws
and when it was done
and it worked again
my wife seemed actually
pissed that it was fixed:
now she'd have to stay up
until midnight doing laundry.

I walked out to the car
with my big black toolbox
and put the box in
the car trunk. It was
like summer out,
mad April summer already,
and the air smelled crazy
and good like it does
on summer nights in California,
and I could hear gun shots
and police sirens far off,
but not so far off as I used to,
and I knew the neighborhood
was changing.

LAST DAYS IN L.A.

We were broke again
so I went and got a
half a tank of unleaded supreme
and then walked into the
AM-PM MINI MARKET
and charged a carton of
rocky road ice cream
a diet Dr. Pepper
a package of fig bars
and a six-pack of Coors.

It was a new store.
I'd never been in there before.
I didn't like the look
of the people behind the counter.
They looked like genetic
defect material.

The one guy had a tiny
head and a huge body.

His forehead was flat and
his eyes were beady and his
cheeks were round as apples.
He looked crazy or retarded.

He was picking up a little
mexican guy while some
under-aged slut laughed
like a hyena.

I didn't like any of them.

I wanted something to smoke
but they didn't have any
pipe tobacco. All the cigars
looked bad; cheap and they
had silly names. I didn't
think I should get cigarettes.

He rang it up and gave me
back my card and I took the
bag out into the rain and
started my car and drove home.

I think it's time I got
out of Los Angeles.

GREEN SOCKS

Somehow or other
over the years
I've managed to pick up
several pairs of
green socks.

I also have my share
of orange socks
baby blue socks
and one pair of
sheer, see-through
tan socks.

I'm not crazy
about any of these
and have always pushed them
to the back of my underwear drawer
in favor of the dark blue,
dark brown and black pairs.

Of course, the blue, brown
and black socks wear out
while the green, orange and
tan socks stay like new.

I haven't bought a hell of
a lot of socks over the past